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DECORATIONS IN OUR CITY SCHOOLROOMS.

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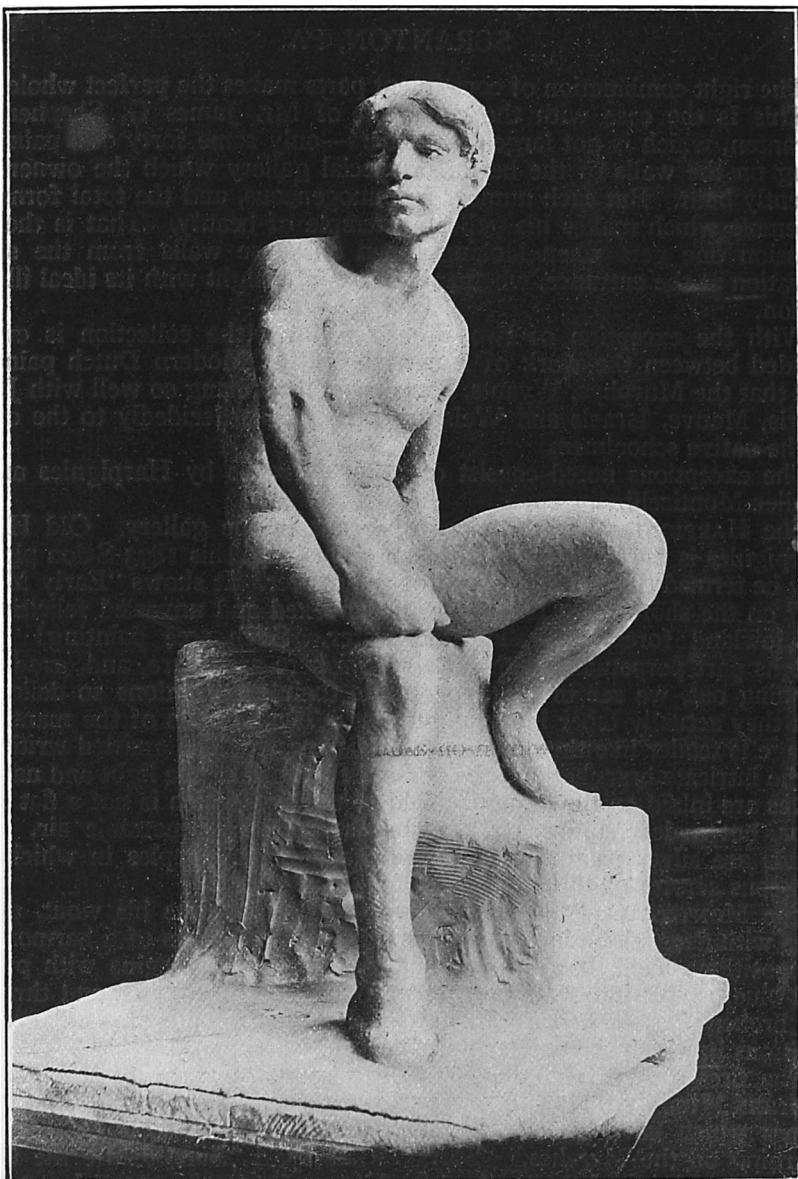
The old-time city school-room was rarely a thing of beauty. Its walls were apt to be dull and grimy, and its woodwork a dark walnut, which but added to its general gloom. From such a building with factory-like façade, with narrow halls and crowded benches, it is a far call to one of the new city schools built about an open court, with brilliantly lighted class-rooms and cheerful trim of oak. In exterior decoration, the newer school buildings in the city are in many cases models of elegance, and it is only a question of time, and not a very long time, before the interior decoration of these buildings will be considered as necessary as their equipment with seats and schoolroom apparatus. In the first cost of these great structures an item of five hundred dollars or even a thousand dollars for suitable pictures and casts would appear as a mere bagatelle. Many signs point to a marked increase in attention to this matter. At the present time there hang in the Assembly Hall of the Board of Education two large mural paintings from the brush of C. Y. Turner. These are to form part of the decoration of the Assembly Room of the new Clinton High School, which is now rapidly nearing completion in West Fifty-ninth Street. For the first time such decorations have been considered as part of the architectural scheme and have been definitely incorporated in the plans for the building.

Of the two pictures referred to, one represents "The First Trip from Lake Erie down the Erie Canal through the Mohawk Valley," and the other "The Wedding of the Waters in New York Bay." The latter shows the waters from several of the great rivers of the world being poured in a glittering stream over the side of a small vessel, while in the distance show the towering masts and yards and the billowing smoke of saluting men-of-war. For the two pictures Mr. Turner received \$3,500. It is the hope that in time the other new high schools will see similar decorations designed for them. Nor have the elementary schools been forgotten. Among those which have been recently erected several have been treated with interesting color schemes on walls and woodwork, while in repainting the older buildings care has been taken to select harmonious tints of green or yellow to cover over the cold "French gray" so often used in the past. Some of the buildings, as P. S. 40 in East Twentieth Street and P. S. 184 in One Hundred and Sixteenth Street, show very interesting treatment of individual class-rooms, where the decorations have been carefully planned and where pictures, casts and mouldings have been so disposed as to form a simple yet harmonious whole. To aid in furthering such decoration the Board of Education has but recently added, at the instance of the Board of Superintendents, a long list of prints of well-known masterpieces, framed in simple mouldings and of a size sufficient to make them valuable as decorations for individual class-rooms.

To the subject of appropriate decorations the Art Department of the schools gives much attention. Through private conferences and public illustrated lectures the eyes of the teachers are constantly directed to what makes for simplicity and excellence in the beautifying of their class-rooms. Many have been interested and many schools show the result of such interest. The older class-rooms, with incongruous pictures, badly framed, badly hung, and jostled by groups of class exercises pinned against the wall, are fast giving way to those where the color of the ceiling, wall and wainscoting and trim have been carefully chosen, where the larger wall spaces have been appropriately filled with three or four

well-framed pictures or casts, and where the teachers have been wise enough to let the smaller spaces go undecorated.

That the well-decorated class-room means much in developing the pupil's taste goes without saying. It begets a love for artistic surroundings which abides with him when he leaves school. Many have come to realize how subtle yet impressive a teacher is environment, hence each year sees an increasing number helping to so order the surroundings of our city children that from their first to their last days in school they may be under the inspiring influence of beautiful school buildings.



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